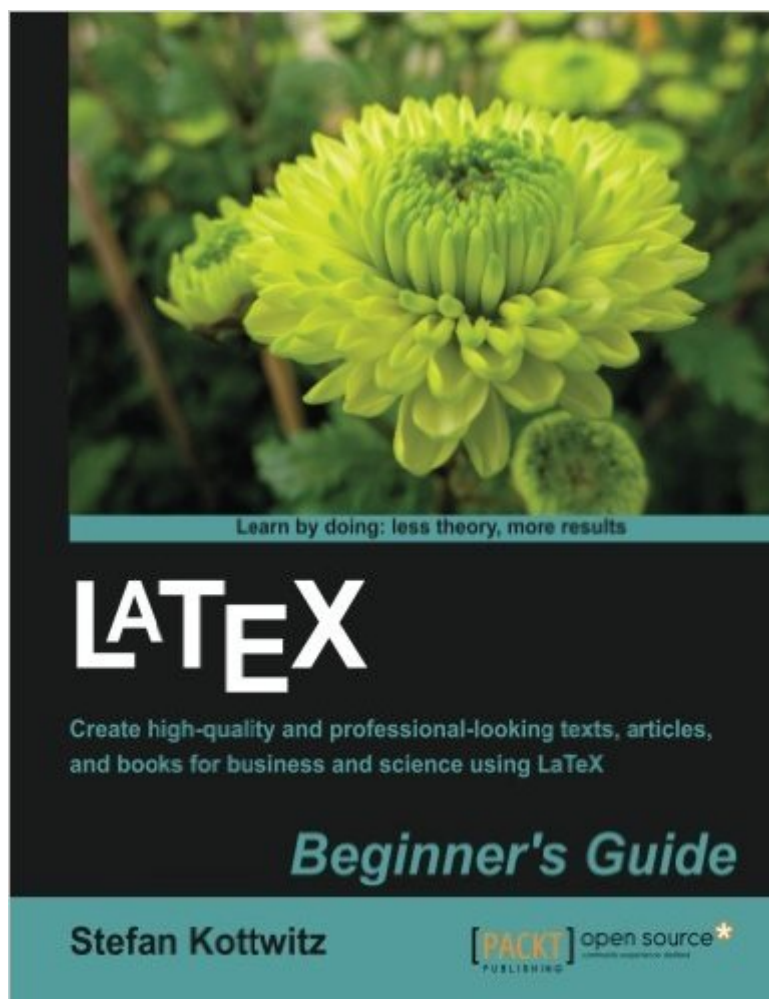


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# LaTeX Beginner's Guide



## Synopsis

When there's a scientific or technical paper to write, the versatility of LaTeX is very attractive. But where can you learn about the software? The answer is this superb beginner's guide, packed with examples and explanations. Overview Use LaTeX's powerful features to produce professionally designed texts Install LaTeX; download, set up, and use additional styles, templates, and tools Typeset math formulas and scientific expressions to the highest standards Include graphics and work with figures and tables Benefit from professional fonts and modern PDF features In Detail LaTeX is high-quality Open Source typesetting software that produces professional prints and PDF files. However, as LaTeX is a powerful and complex tool, getting started can be intimidating. There is no official support and certain aspects such as layout modifications can seem rather complicated. It may seem more straightforward to use Word or other WYSIWG programs, but once you've become acquainted, LaTeX's capabilities far outweigh any initial difficulties. This book guides you through these challenges and makes beginning with LaTeX easy. If you are writing Mathematical, Scientific, or Business papers, or have a thesis to write, then this is the perfect book for you. LaTeX Beginner's Guide offers you a practical introduction to LaTeX with plenty of step-by-step examples. Beginning with the installation and basic usage, you will learn to typeset documents containing tables, figures, formulas, and common book elements like bibliographies, glossaries, and indexes and go on to managing complex documents and using modern PDF features. It's easy to use LaTeX, when you have LaTeX Beginner's Guide to hand. This practical book will guide you through the essential steps of LaTeX, from installing LaTeX, formatting, and justification to page design. Right from the beginning, you will learn to use macros and styles to maintain a consistent document structure

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## Customer Reviews

When I read about the publication of the book on various forums and blogs, my interest was definitely piqued: the author, Stefan Kottwitz, is a frequent and helpful contributor/moderator on TeX.SX. On the other hand I wondered if anyone would actually want to buy an introductory book to LaTeX, considering the many free tutorials and eBooks available on the Web (although there are many out-of-date ones, so beware!) After a quick flip through the book, I felt the answer was a very firm "YES". First off, this is certainly an up-to-date book with descriptions of recent packages, and warnings about obsolete ones. While the first few chapter headings read like most other beginner's guide to LATEX, Kottwitz's approach of using complete step-by-step examples throughout the book is something seldom seen in other books or tutorials. By that I mean you don't just get the first few handful of "Hello World" examples, but for much more advanced usage scenarios as well. (BTW, The examples are based on TeXLive and TeXworks.) Your mileage may vary, but I do feel that such a hand-holding approach (that's what my training course had been described as) -- at least in the early days of learning LaTeX -- is very reassuring. Especially so since LaTeX can be rather intimidating for people who have only used WYSIWYG word processors before. There are pop quizzes interspersed throughout the content (answers in the appendix). The book has 13 chapters on the following topics: 1. Getting Started with LaTeX 2. Formatting Words, Lines, and Paragraphs 3. Designing Pages 4. Creating Lists 5. Creating Tables and Inserting Pictures 6. Cross-Referencing 7. Listing Content and References 8. Typing Math Formulas 9. Using Fonts 10.

**Preface:** ===== The author, Stefan Kottwitz, can be found in all common (La)TeX forums as the user Stefan\_K and if you're not new to LaTeX you probably already met him online. Since that was the case for me, I knew that he knows what he's talking about and so this book was a must-have for me. I read it in two days and I have to say: I am surprised and amazed. Although it's titled "Beginner's Guide", the target group definitely isn't restricted to beginners. I already wrote larger documents with LaTeX, so I wouldn't consider myself a beginner - and yet I learned a lot just by reading this book once.

**Structure:** ===== The book itself is divided into 13 chapters, each being divided into smaller sections. It usually begins with explaining the topic and how to do it in general, followed by "time for action" examples, which then are explained and discussed in detail. That way, it is easy to follow his thoughts, but also to skip certain parts if you want to. I recommend reading

everything though, because sometimes he gives little hints which can be really useful. Content:=====What can I say - amazing! From how to install a TeX distribution on your computer to how to manage even large projects this book covers everything you (or at least I) need. You really learn how to use LaTeX from scratch and, since I wasn't new to it I know that, he tells you about all the small problems you will sooner or later meet. If I would have had this book at least two years ago, I could have saved myself a lot of time using Google and forums.

This book covers all the basics of LaTeX and then some in thirteen chapters totaling about three hundred pages. Each chapter contains a Quiz with solutions given in the Appendix. It starts with the usual Installation chapter with the installation detailed for Windows, not other environments. It then goes on in a logical sequence starting with formatting words, lines, paragraphs, and pages. Next are lists, tables, tabbings, and pictures (bizarrely in the same chapter as tables), cross-references, lists of references, indexes, bibliographies, maths, fonts (but not much on Unicode), long documents, hyperlinks and bookmarks to finish with a nice and useful chapter on troubleshooting, followed by online resources, answers to quizzes and an index. The book is for beginners in LaTeX, but not for computer novices. You will need some fluency in computer lingo since many terms are not defined nor explained. But then, most people who would be aware of the existence of LaTeX and consider using it are probably somewhat computer savvy. The advantage is that the book can cover quite some ground and still remain within a reasonable number of pages. Overall I found the book to be a good introduction to LaTeX. It packs up quite a good deal of information in a relative small amount of pages and is easy to follow and well organized. I do have a few caveats though. The book was made using InDesign CS4, not LaTeX. It would have been nice to see LaTeX in action. Furthermore, the book has very little on Unicode. The book is about LaTeX, it does not deal at all with XeTeX. It's still useful, but you need to know it. The author uses TeXWorks on Windows. As a result, if you use a Mac and/or another editor, some pages will be useless.

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